A LETTER to a
Member of Parliament
On the Account of ſome preſent Tranſactions.

HONOURED SIR,

THE Experience I have had of your impartial dealings, encouraged me to make this Addreſs to you; and however aſſuming it may be thought, yet I am ſure 'tis no unſeaſonable Application: how unhappy ſoever the ſeveral late turns of our Affairs have been, I am ſenſible you have had no ſhare in them, and therefore when any of thoſe Tranſactions are brought upon the Stage, I dare in every thing appeal to you as an unprejudiced Spectator.

What you have hitherto done, I doubt not is the Effect of a moſt deliberate Conſideration; and tho' ſome Objections are made, yet I hope that evident Neceſſity, which is always able to over-rule Forms, will eaſily juſtifie the Integrity of your Actions.

Moſt Men are by this time ſatisfied that Popery and Slavery are Vanquiſhed, and that nothing is wanting but a healing Cordial to ſettle the Conſtitution, after the ſtrains of a violent Purgation; But in ſome Men the Humours are ſo floating, that when one angry part is relieved, another immediately becomes uneaſie; and this unhappineſs of Temper is ſo afflicting, that there can never be a perfect ſtate of Health, when by all the Lenitives you apply, you cannot make the Pain leave the Man, but only change its ſtation.

I was in hopes that our preſent good Fortune would have made all Proteſtants ſo loving, that the memory of former Injuries could never ſower their good Nature; ſince Men of all diviſions among them have been unwarily injurious to each other; this ſhould facilitate their Reconciliation, and inſtead of ripping up old Sores, ſhould rather hide thoſe, which perhaps may appear of a greener Complexion. 'Tis too much like the common Artifice of Scolding to be quick in throwing Calumnies: and 'twas only the Thief that never entered into Paradice, who could upbraid when he himſelf was in the ſame Condemnation.

I muſt confeſs, there are ſome Dealings, that are enough to ferment even the Blood of a *Stoick*: to hear a Regulator Cant againſt Surrendring of Charters; to find a Man accuſed of holding Correſpondence with Papiſts, by one that ſat at Meat with the Pope's *Nuncio*; to ſee a late Addreſſor (who in ſpite of all Laws, would allow of the Diſpenſing Power) furious for ſome diſputable Cuſtoms in particular Corporations; I ſay to ſee Men under theſe Circumſtances proſecuting ſome few Miſcarriages, which are ſo old, that nothing but Malice could remember; muſt tempt a Man to believe, that either they have no ſenſe of their own Faults, or elſe that they are afraid to be call'd to account, and ſo by putting others firſt, would willingly Poſtpone their Puniſhment.

I am told that Sir *J. M---r*, Sir *W. P---d*, and ſome others, are accuſed for Male Adminiſtration in their Offices Seven or Eight years ſince: So ſtale a Reſentment is not worthy of your Conſideration; and ſince their Accuſers are ſo good at Recollecting of Crimes, I wonder they had not run back to Original Sin, and proſecuted them for being the Progeny of *Adam*: this Fault is much more demonſtrable; and if Regeneration be an Excuſe, they can in the other Caſe too produce variety of Pardons.

But when the Matter comes before you, I do not doubt but you will tranſfer ſuch trivial Grievances to their proper place, and not ſuffer private Peeks to diſturb the Settlement of three Kingdoms: This Buſineſs is become the Diſcourſe of the whole Town, and doubtleſs ſhortly will be that of the Country too; ſome rejoyce at theſe Gentlemen's Misfortune; others, and perhaps the more conſiderate, are exceeding Sorry; ſuch contrariety of Paſſions muſt needs be very claſhing, and not fit Ingredients for that happy Union, which His Majeſty has graciouſly deſigned.

And indeed ſuch unhappy Recollections muſt needs breed ill blood; for theſe Gentlemen's Actions for which they are Accuſed, have been Countenanced by many, and Approved of by moſt; ſo that the Cenſures you paſs upon them, will vertually reach all the reſt, and upon a fair Poll they will be found too numerous to be diſobliged.

If ſeveral of thoſe Men to whom this Paſſage may be very pleaſing, ſhould perhaps ſince the Date of theſe Miſcarriages, be found themſelves Criminal in a higher Degree; theſe provoking Accuſations may tempt Men to bring on further Complaints, and when

you are once beset with Indictments, (besides the loss of your time) you must either lye under the Censure of being Partial, or extend your Animadversions perhaps further than you at first intended.

The great Objection against these Gentlemen is, That what they did, was to serve a Popish Interest: I must confess that I think the Papists have been a long time undermining us, but I believe when these Gentlemen were in Office, they lay deeper under Ground than they have done for the time since, when others became the Favourites; and when the design began visibly to appear, they worthily refus'd their Assistance: So that how foul soever you may fall upon their mistakes, their Integrity is Spotless; and tho excess of Loyalty might induce them to be influenced by the King, 'tis plain they had nothing to do with the Papists.

If these Gentlemen consented to some things which were fatal in their consequence, 'tis plain that others receiv'd what they had done, and improved them to greater inconveniencies: They are accused for an undue Choice of two Sheriffs, others had consented to put upon us four Parliament Men by illegal Elections; now after a due consideration of Circumstances, that which appears to be the most dangerous mistake, ought in reason to be the Subject of your first Enquiry; and then in common construction, which do you think is most to blame, he that unwarily sets a House on Fire, or another who feeds the Flame when he sees it kindled.

Perhaps those Persons who would have you censure these Gentlemen, may think their crimes to be Notorious, and that there is nothing to be found on their own side but Innocence. Whereas 'tis difficult to imagine, that men in such great heats, always kept within their due compass; and if Men of all sides have been faulty, this unreasonable Prosecution will oblige these Gentlemen to discover for their defence, what they are willing to conceal out of Charity; so that the natural consequence of this contest, will be the reviving of old Quarrels, the very thoughts of which to an honest Man must be but a very uncomfortable prospect.

To prosecute old Grudges, at a time when we have Criminals of so high a Nature to encounter, will be both a scandal to our selves, and a comfort to our Enemies; 'twill shew that revenge with us is not so much a Passion, as a Principle; and that we can at any time let Popery gather strength, so that we can but humble one another. Indeed these Gentlemens Accusers may think it too early to call to Account the late Instruments of our Miseries, and since crimes are to be punished according to their Antiquity, ten Years hence may be the proper time of their reckoning. But wise and indifferent Men will think that crimes are to be considered, more according to their bulk than standing; for an old fault has lost its Malignity, time has wiped off the Stain, and the man is become Innocent by Prescription; so that to pursue a man with Anger, after a long Truce and a tacit Reconciliation, is neither Just nor Generous; 'tis too much like *French* Faith, to fall upon the Allies as soon as the common Enemy is vanquished.

Neither can it be for the Interest of their Majestys, to have their Subjects pickeering one with another; their Affairs are not yet so well settled, as to bear the effects of private Animosities; and if their Enemies may expect tenderness from the mildness of their Reign, 'tis a little too preposterous to bring perhaps their best Friends immediately into Trouble. You are now upon a noble project of uniting Protestants, and therefore I hope you will not think that Anger is a convenient preparative to love, and that the best expedient to make them Friends, is to divide them into factions.

That this will be the probable consequence of so ungrateful a review of former proceedings, seems very evident; for First, a great part of the Nation have not so terrible an Idea of the matter in Question, and then to be severe upon Persons for a moot fault will sound very harsh, especially when their late worthly behaviour had sufficiently attoned for greater miscarriages; and Secondly, a great many considerable men of the same, and other Corporations are in the same instances culpable; so that if you extend your punishments only to these Gentlemen, and your pardon to the rest, yet you involve them too in the same Guilt, which to a generous mind is equally afflicting; and tho you do not punish, yet you will be thought to insult, and expose them to the reproaches of every insolent reflector.

And therefore I hope for the safety of the Nation, for the sake of their Majesties, and the interest of Religion, you will not countenance every angry Spirit, which by its long continuance seems to be stiffned into Malice and Revenge; that your Glorious Endeavours may not be frustrated by the remembrance of former Misunderstandings, which I am afraid on all sides are easier forgot than justified; that we may henceforth avoid the contrivance of the Jesuite, which is always active and working; for he who hath not strength to conquer, may yet have the cunning to divide.

I am Sir,

March the 14th, 1689. *Your much obliged Servant.*

134290